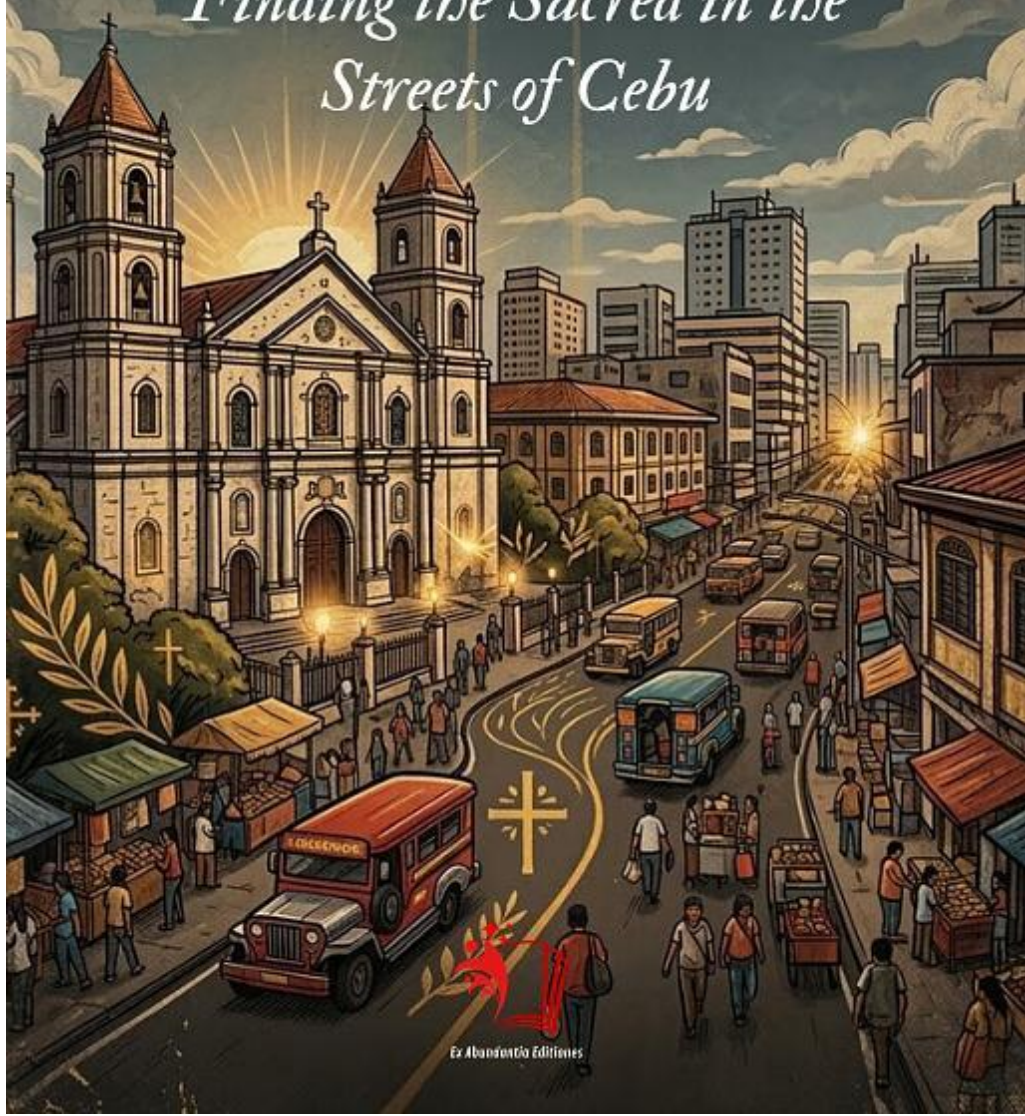


The Gospel IN THE CITY

*Finding the Sacred in the
Streets of Cebu*



Ex Abundantia Editiones

The Gospel in the City

Finding the Sacred in the Streets of Cebu

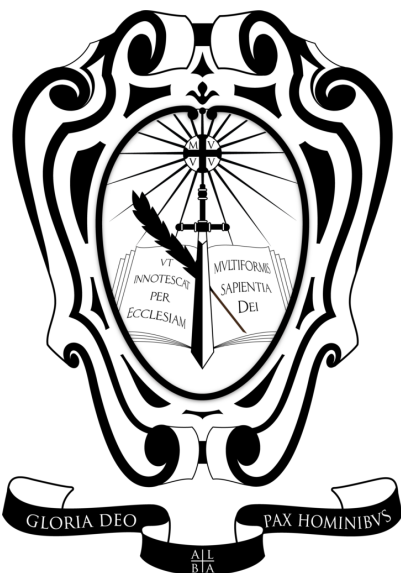
Copyright © 2026 by Ex Abundantia Editiones

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise without written permission from the publisher. It is illegal to copy this book, post it to a website, or distribute it by any other means without permission.

First edition

This book was professionally typeset on Reedsy

Find out more at reedsy.com



To the people of Cebu and Mandaue, whose daily lives are the heartbeat of these pages. To the Saint Paul Seminary Foundation for nurturing my mission, and to Mr. Jean Carl Nathaniel Supan for the tools to share it digitally

.

Above all, to the Divine Master: may this work, born from the abundance of the heart, serve Your Kingdom.

“GLORIA DEO – PAX HOMINIBUS”

“A good person out of the store of goodness
in his heart produces good, but an evil
person out of a store of evil produces evil;
for from the fullness of the heart the mouth
speaks.”

— Luke 6:45 (NABRE)

Contents

Preface

Acknowledgments

Prologue

Introduction

1. The Theology of the Rain Barrel

A Local Crisis of Responsibility

The Scriptural Lens: Order vs. Neglect

The Pauline Mandate for Civic Honesty

The Sin of Shifting the Burden

A Call to Faithful Action

2. The Multiplication of the Seedlings

A Local Vision for a Greener Future

The Gospel Lens: Compassion in Action

The Miracle of Small Offerings

Turning Requirement into Calling

Conclusion: The Fertile Start of the Kingdom

3. The Stretcher of Safety

A Tri-City Mission of Peace

The Scriptural Lens: Faith through Logistics

The Modern ‘Stretcher’ of Crowd Control

Conclusion: Stewardship in the Streets

4. The Lamb of the Public Fund

A Breach of Public Trust

The Scriptural Lens: The Stolen Lamb

The “Little Lamb” of Mandaue

A Call for Courage and Transparency

Conclusion: Protecting the Neighbor’s Lamb

5. The Cry for Justice on the Road

A Tragedy on the Streets of Cebu

The Scriptural Lens: The First Denial of Responsibility

The Mistake of Running Away

No Sin Stays Hidden Forever

The Christian Response: Embracing the Role of ‘Keeper’

Conclusion: A City of Brothers and Sisters

6. Conclusion

Epilogue

Afterword

About the Author

Also by Ex Abundantia Editiones

Preface

The reflections contained in *The Gospel in the City* were born at a unique intersection: the quiet, prayerful halls of the **Saint Paul Seminary Foundation** and the vibrant, often chaotic energy of the streets of **Cebu**.

As a student of **Digital and Social Media Publishing**, I was challenged to consider how the timeless message of the Gospel can be effectively communicated in an age of constant connectivity and digital noise. This publication is my response to that challenge. While it serves as my final project for the course under the guidance of **Mr. Jean Carl Nathaniel Supan**, it has become much more than a mere academic requirement for me.

The title of my imprint, *Ex Abundantia Editiones*, is a reflection of a deeply personal mission. In the seminary, we are often reminded that we cannot give what we do not possess. We must first be filled with the Word so that, “out of the abundance of the heart,” we can speak a word of hope to the world.

Throughout early 2026, I found myself looking at the news—stories of rainwater harvesting in Mandaue, tree-planting initiatives, and even the somber reports of road safety tragedies—and I realized these were not just “secular” issues. They were spiritual invitations. This book is a record of my attempt to “read the signs of the times” and to find the presence of the Divine Master in the heart of our urban life.

It is my hope that these pages inspire you to see your own civic duties as a path to holiness. Whether you are a student, a professional, or a fellow traveler on the road of faith, may you find in these reflections a reason to love your city more deeply and to serve your neighbor more faithfully.

Ex Abundantia Editiones

Silang, Cavite, March 2026

Acknowledgments

This digital publication is the result of a collaborative journey of faith, learning, and community. I am deeply grateful to those who have contributed their time, wisdom, and support to make *The Gospel in the City* a reality.

First and foremost, I wish to thank **Mr. Jean Carl Nathaniel Supan**. As our professor in **Digital and Social Media Publishing**, your expertise and encouragement pushed me to explore how the Gospel can be effectively shared in the digital age. This project is a direct fruit of your mentorship and the creative space you provided in our classroom.

I am profoundly grateful to the **Saint Paul Seminary Foundation**. To my formators and fellow seminarians, thank you for providing the spiritual environment where these reflections could be nurtured. The Pauline charism of communication is the very soul of **Ex Abundantia Editiones**.

A special word of thanks goes to the **Journalists and News Agencies** of Cebu and Mandaue. Your commitment to reporting the “Signs of the Times” provided the essential raw material for my theological integration. Without your work on the front lines of our city’s stories, this bridge between the news and the Word could not have been built.

To my **family and friends**, especially those in **Cebu**, thank you for keeping me grounded in the realities of our local community. Your lived experiences of the city’s joys and struggles are reflected in every chapter of this book.

Finally, to the **Divine Master**, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Thank you for the gift of communication and for the “abundance of the heart” that allows us to see Your presence in every street, every headline, and every neighbor.

Prologue

The city is a living, breathing text. Its stories are written in the rush of floodwaters through the streets of Mandaue, in the dirt beneath a student's fingernails as they plant a seedling, and in the heavy silence that follows a tragedy on the road. Often, we read the news as a series of disconnected events—problems to be solved by engineers, laws to be enforced by politicians, or tragedies to be managed by the police.

However, for the Christian, the city is more than just a grid of concrete and commerce; it is the primary arena where our faith is tested and lived.

The title of this edition, ***Ex Abundantia***, reminds us of the biblical truth that “*out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks*” (Luke 6:45). This compilation was born from a heart that looks at the “signs of the times” in Cebu and Mandaue and refuses to see them as merely secular. When we look closer, we see that a city ordinance is not just a rule, but a call to stewardship. A security plan for a religious procession is not just logistics, but a modern “stretcher” carrying the paralyzed toward healing. A court case against a clerk is not just a legal matter, but a prophetic cry for the “one little lamb” of the poor.

The reflections contained in these pages seek to integrate the theological with the civic. They are a response to the question first asked at the dawn of history: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” As you read through these chapters, I invite you to stop seeing the city and the Church as two separate worlds. Instead, see them as one. Every raindrop we catch, every tree we plant, and every neighbor we protect is a physical prayer. May these pages inspire you to see the “abundance” of God’s grace working through our civic duties, and may we all learn to work quietly, responsibly, and with a deep, communal love for the place we call home.

Ex Abundantia Editiones

Silang, Cavite, Philippines 2026

Introduction

How do we live a life of faith in a world that feels increasingly divided between the “sacred” and the “secular”? We often go to church on Sundays to hear the Word of God, but on Monday mornings, we open our phones to news of floods, corruption, and tragedy. It is easy to feel that the Bible belongs to the past and the news belongs to a complicated, modern present.

This compilation, **Ex Abundantia Editiones**, is an exercise in **Theological and Civic Integration**. It is based on the belief that the Gospel is not a museum piece, but a living lens through which we must view our community.

The Three-Fold Path

Each reflection in this book follows a specific journey of the mind and heart:

1. **The Human Condition (The News):** We begin with the reality of our home—Cebu and Mandaue City. We look at the “Signs of the Times” as reported by local journalists. These stories represent our shared struggles, from environmental crises to the need for public safety.
2. **The Divine Light (The Word):** We then turn to the Scriptures. We look for the “echo” of the news in the Bible. Whether it is St. Paul’s call to order in Thessalonica or King David’s confrontation with the Prophet Nathan, we find that our modern problems have ancient roots and spiritual solutions.
3. **The Call to Action (The Response):** Finally, we integrate the two. We ask: *What does this mean for us today?* This is where civic duty becomes a holy calling. We move from being mere “citizens” to becoming “stewards” and “keepers.”

The Goal of this Collection

The goal of these pages is to help you cultivate a “prophetic eye”—the ability to see the spiritual dimensions of everyday life. When you see a rain barrel, you should see the

discipline of the Apostles. When you see a student planting a tree, you should see the miracle of the loaves and fish. When you see a security guard, you should see the four friends carrying the paralytic.

By reading the news through the Gospel, we realize that we are never just “doing our jobs” or “following the law.” We are building the Kingdom of God, one act of responsibility at a time. Welcome to a journey through the streets of our city, guided by the light of the Word.

— **Ex Abundantia Editiones**

The Theology of the Rain Barrel

Connecting Civic Duty in Mandaue to the Spiritual Discipline of St. Paul

“For we hear that some among you are walking in a disorderly way, not keeping busy but minding the business of others. Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food.” — **2 Thessalonians 3:11-12**

A Local Crisis of Responsibility

City flooding is a constant problem in our areas, and the news from my hometown Mandaue City, Cebu, highlighted it again this week. After the last big storm, Typhoon Tino, City Councilor Joel Seno made a serious but sensible call: strongly enforce the city’s “**Storm Ordinance**” by making every household practice simple rainwater harvesting. What is striking about this plan is not that it’s complicated, but how simple it is. It’s a cheap, effective solution that only asks for responsibility from each home. The truth is that this community problem is not just caused by bad engineering; it’s caused by a failure in collective responsibility—everyone not doing their part.



Mandaue City Councilor Joel Seno is calling for the strict implementation of the city's "Storm Ordinance" which encourages households and commercial buildings to practice rainwater harvesting.

The Scriptural Lens: Order vs. Neglect

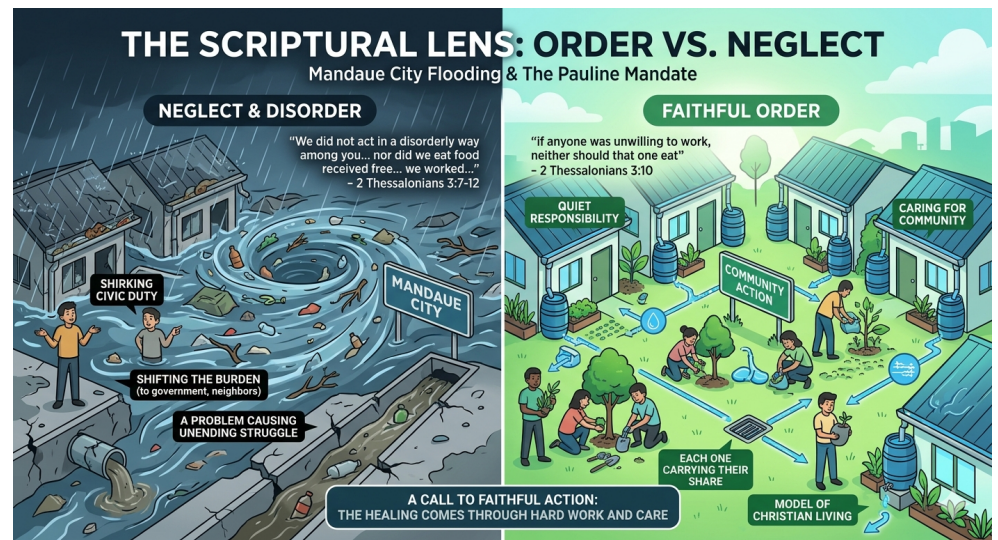
When we read this local call for basic hard work and then look at the week's Bible reading last November 16, **2 Thessalonians 3:7-12**, a strong idea pops up: the same lack of order Paul warns about might be causing us to ignore our community and environment. This tells us that caring for the earth is not just a kind thing to do, but an important part of being a Christian.

Mandaue has spent millions of pesos, but the flooding has not yet been truly fixed. This ongoing difficulty is mainly because of the **"disorderly way"** our buildings and habits interact with nature. Councilor Seno's numbers are strong: imagine if 80,000 homes, each with just a couple of simple barrels, kept water off the streets. But right now, people can choose not to follow the rule, and the group effort falls apart. The floodwater, rushing through the streets, carrying trash and causing damage, is a powerful, clear sign of our collective neglect. It's the result of everyone shrugging and expecting that someone else—the mayor, or the national government's Public Works department—will always be there to clean up or carry the huge weight of the problem.

The Pauline Mandate for Civic Honesty

The Apostle Paul's message to the Thessalonians offers a strong and maybe difficult lesson about this expectation. Paul shows what responsible work looks like, telling his readers, *"We did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day, we worked, so as not to burden any of you."* This is a message about deep community honesty: our spiritual life is connected to the responsible actions we take.

The famous line, *"if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat,"* is usually only seen as a money rule, but I think it's very important for our civic and environmental duties too. To be **"unwilling to work"** here is to refuse the easy, low-cost job of being a good citizen—to throw trash in the wrong place, to not bother with simple rainwater harvesting—and then to expect public funds and weary city workers to always pay for what we refuse to do.



It visually contrasts the concept of "Neglectful Disorder" with "Faithful Order," using metaphors of flooding, rainwater harvesting, and community responsibility based on the Scriptural lens of 2 Thessalonians.

The Sin of Shifting the Burden

The Mandaue problem is a clear example of the “**disorderly way**” Paul condemns: people who are “*not keeping busy but minding the business of others.*” When we ignore our main role—the hard work of catching rainwater or sorting trash—we are essentially pushing the work onto others: the city council, the engineers, and our neighbors downstream whose homes will be swamped. This laziness is like a bad habit that hurts the community, loading it up with problems and costs that could have been avoided. When we refuse to do the seemingly small work of environmental care, we break the promise to help each other, the genuine ***bayanihan*** that should define us as Christians. The city’s huge, expensive drainage projects become a never-ending, pointless fight, constantly ruined by the lack of daily discipline from individual households.

A Call to Faithful Action

This news story, seen through the lens of the Bible, becomes a clear call for people who share the Christian message. Our job is not just to report the flood or summarize the ordinance; it’s to connect building projects with spirituality. The “**sign of the times**” here is that the climate crisis—felt as intensely as flooding in Mandaue—is deeply connected to a crisis of personal discipline and communal love. The real call is to preach the importance of the small work—the collection barrel, the sorted trash, the carefully managed water flow—as a real-world sign of loving our neighbor and living in Christian order.

We are called to be models, to “*work quietly and to eat their own food,*” meaning we should quietly and responsibly manage our own household’s impact so that we don’t become a long-term problem for the larger body of the city. By keeping up with these small, careful acts of care, we do more than just protect our homes; we offer real proof of the order and responsibility that Christ asks us to build in the world. The healing Malachi speaks of isn’t just a sudden miracle; it happens through the quiet, hard work of a community that finally decides to carry its shared and personal burdens.

2

The Multiplication of the Seedlings

Mandaue's Graduation Mandate as a Modern Miracle of the Loaves and Fish

"Jesus asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' 'Seven,' they replied, 'and a few small fish.' ... Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people." — Matthew 15:34-36

A Local Vision for a Greener Future

The local news this week shared a big, important rule from Mandaue City, Cebu: a new law that says all students finishing senior high school and college must plant at least two trees before they can graduate. This rule was created by Sangguniang Kabataan Federation President Fleuritz Gayle Jumao-as. This tree-planting program is meant to protect our environment and help prevent disasters. The people who made the law saw the clear problems of cutting down too many trees and the severe flooding in the city. The new rule is a way of saying that the city's problems with nature are serious and need fast, large-scale help, and that this effort must start with young people.



Image of Sangguniang Kabataan Federation President Fleuritz Gayle Jumao-as, together with Hon. Jen Del Mar, City Councilor, and the Mandaue City Hall image.

The Gospel Lens: Compassion in Action

To understand this local action more deeply, we look at it through the lens of the Gospel reading for this week, **Matthew 15:29-37**, which tells the story of Jesus feeding four thousand people. By doing this, we can see how an everyday civic duty connects to a profound spiritual lesson about kindness and shared responsibility.

The Gospel is about great kindness and working together to provide for everyone. Jesus, moved by pity for the hungry crowd, did not send them away to faint on the road. Instead, He asked His followers what they had. They answered: *“Seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.”* Jesus took these small offerings, gave thanks to God, broke them, and gave them to His followers, who then gave them to the crowds. Everyone ate until they were full.

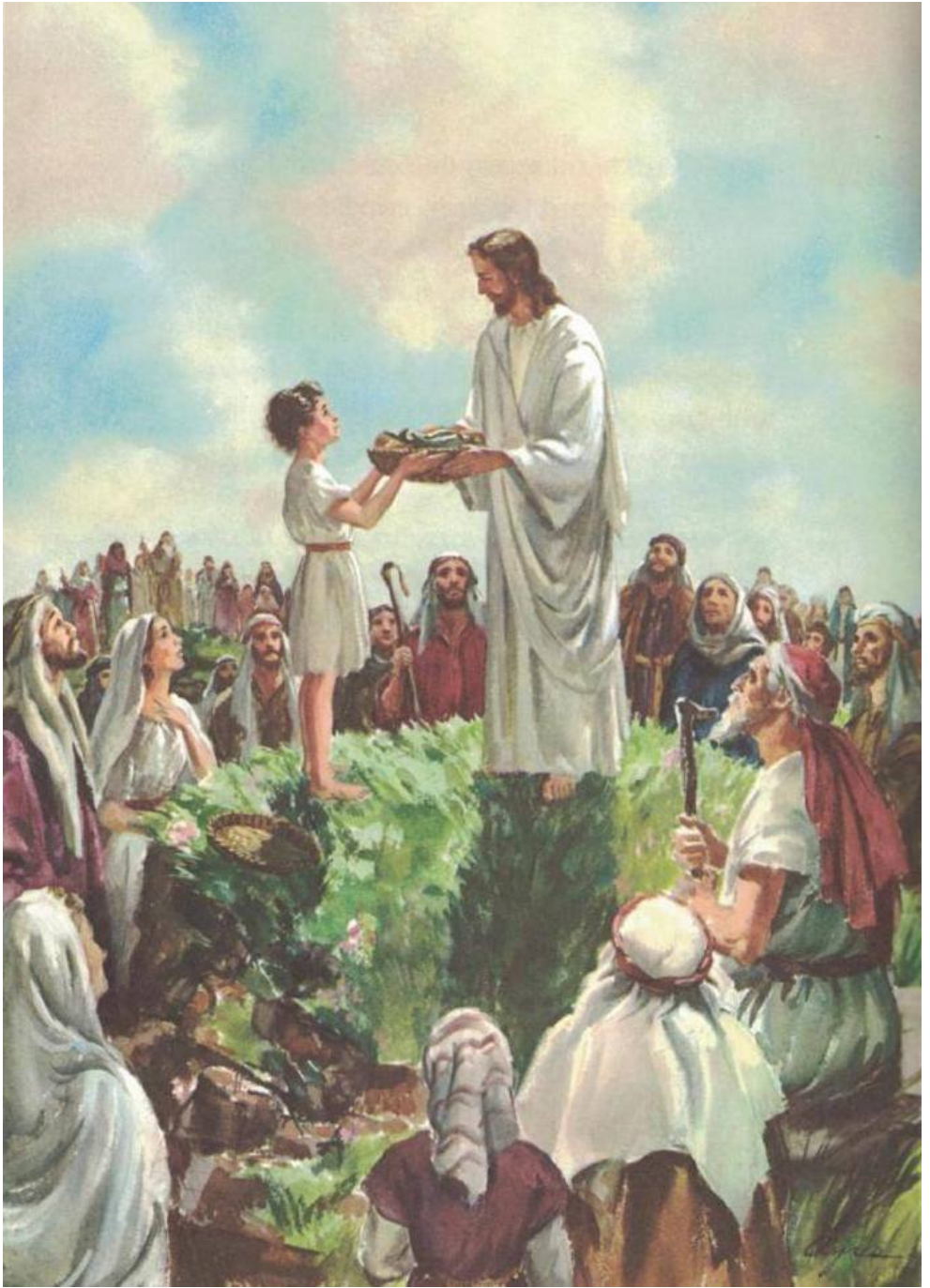


Image of Jesus feeding the crowd

The Miracle of Small Offerings

The main point this Gospel shows us is that *“pity and kindness must lead to strong action.”* The Mandaue City Council, seeing the community’s chronic flooding, is showing a form of civic kindness—a public action that copies Jesus’ clear provision. The law says that the city cannot just ignore the problems caused by damaging nature; everyone, especially the youth, must be involved in fixing it.

Furthermore, the story teaches that *“God can use the small things we offer.”* The Mandaue law only asks for a minimum of two trees per student. On its own, planting two trees seems small compared to the huge problem of deforestation. But when thousands of students plant two trees each year, this small, individual action becomes a huge power for healing and growing. The two trees become the **“seven loaves”**—a necessary, humble offering that leads to a massive restoration of local nature and a real, ongoing miracle of life.

Turning Requirement into Calling

The most important job of a Christian communicator here is to explain that **“this required civic duty is a holy, good act.”** We should not let this new law be seen only as a boring task before graduation. Instead, it is a wonderful chance for students to practice a physical and spiritual act of kindness: taking responsible care of God’s world and directly protecting the most helpless people in the city from floods and disasters. The act of planting shows *“Christ’s care for the physical needs of people”* by giving protection and clean air for the whole city.

Conclusion: The Fertile Start of the Kingdom

In conclusion, the Mandaue City ordinance is a clear sign of the times. By looking at this law through the Gospel’s teaching of compassion, we see that the rule is more than just a requirement; it is a calling. Every student’s two trees are an act of faith—the *“miracle of multiplication”* where many small offerings, when put together, bring great healing. We must inspire graduates to see the dirt on their hands not as a sign of forced work, but as the *“fertile start of their commitment to God’s Kingdom”* right here in Mandaue City. This is how the huge problem of climate change can be met by the Gospel’s teaching of radical, shared kindness.

3

The Stretcher of Safety

Security as Stewardship: Carrying the Faithful to the Señor Santo Niño

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ ... Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on.” — Mark 2:4-5

A Tri-City Mission of Peace

The local news this week focuses on the massive safety preparations in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue, and Lapu-Lapu for the annual Sto. Niño Traslacion. According to the Philippine Information Agency, the tri-cities have stepped up their security measures as thousands of devotees join the religious processions. Mandaue City alone has doubled its uniformed personnel to 1,600, including police, fire, and coast guard units. Mayor Thadeo Jovito “Jonkie” Ouano emphasized that the *“peace and order of the fiesta are in the hands”* of these responders. This effort is not just about crowd control; it is a vital service to ensure that the **“signs of the times”**—the deep spiritual hunger and massive gathering of the faithful—do not lead to accidents or harm.

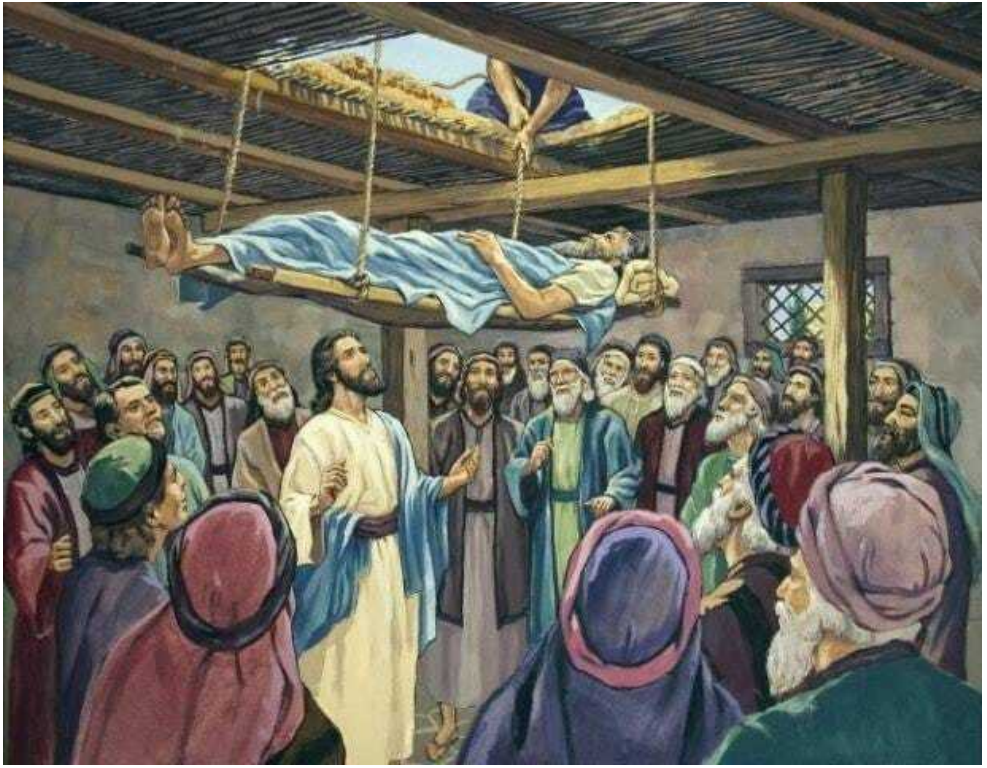


After Mass, Mandaue City officials send off some 1,600 police and other security personnel who will be fielded during the Traslacion on January 15. | CDN Digital Photo/Mary Rose Sagarino

The Scriptural Lens: Faith through Logistics

To understand this coordination better, we look at the Gospel for Friday, January 16, 2026, which is **Mark 2:1-12**. This story describes how four men carried a paralyzed friend to Jesus. Because the crowd was too large, they had to be creative and careful to get him there safely. This scripture helps us see that *“caring for the safety of others is a true act of faith.”*

The Gospel story of the Healing of a Paralytic shows us the power of working together. Four men wanted to bring their friend to Jesus, but the house was so crowded that they could not get through the door. Instead of giving up, they carried him to the roof, made an opening, and lowered his mat. When Jesus saw **“their faith”**—the faith of the friends who carried him—He healed the man. This story is about more than just a miracle; it is about the **“safety and security”** provided by the friends.



*This image depicts the biblical account of **Jesus healing a paralytic man** in Capernaum, a story found in the Gospel of **Mark 2:1–12**.*

The Modern ‘Stretcher’ of Crowd Control

In the Traslacion, the thousands of devotees are like the man on the mat, and the 1,600 security personnel are like the four friends. Just as the friends cleared a path and managed the “**crowd control**” at the house in Capernaum, the local governments are clearing paths through the streets. The Mayor’s statement that “*peace is in your hands*” reminds us that when we protect the physical safety of the faithful, we are acting like the friends in the Gospel.

The job of a Christian communicator is to show that “*safety rules are actually acts of love and service*.” Sometimes, devotees might feel frustrated by barriers or police presence. However, we are called to explain that these measures are like the “**stretcher**” that carries the community. Our task is to remind everyone that “**peace and order**” are not just government rules, but a way to look after our neighbors, especially the weak and the elderly.

Conclusion: Stewardship in the Streets

In conclusion, the safety preparations for the 2026 Traslacion are a clear sign of how much we value the lives of our brothers and sisters. When we look at the tri-city efforts through the Gospel of the paralytic, we realize that *“security is not just about ‘policing’—it is about stewardship.”* The **“signs of the times”** show us that in our crowded and often chaotic world, we need to build **“safe roofs”** and clear paths for one another. As we participate in the Fiesta Señor, we are challenged to see every security guard, medic, and volunteer as a friend helping us reach the Lord. By working together and staying vigilant, we ensure that our celebration of the Holy Child is a time of healing and peace, where everyone can safely say, **“Pit Senyor!”**

The Lamb of the Public Fund

Confronting Corruption: Mandaue City’s Quest for Justice and the Prophecy of Nathan

“Then David’s anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, ‘As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die! He must pay for the lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.’ Then Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’”— 2 Samuel 12:5-7

A Breach of Public Trust

This reflection looks at a local news story from Cebu and connects it to a reading from the Bible. By looking at a modern case of missing money through a story about King David, we can see why being honest in government is so important today. On January 30, 2026, *The Freeman* reported that the Mandaue City Government sued a former clerk named Mary Leah Quimbo. She is accused of taking **₱3.34 million** of the city’s money—funds that came from taxes paid by local workers and businesses and were intended for essential city services. The clerk allegedly hid her actions by making fake reports. Even though she was fired a year ago, the city is now taking her to court to recover the funds and show that stealing from the public is a serious crime.



The Mandaue City Hall. | CDN Digital File photo

The Scriptural Lens: The Stolen Lamb

The Bible reading for Saturday, January 31, 2026 (**2 Samuel 12:1-7a**), tells the story of the Prophet Nathan and King David. Nathan tells David about a rich man who had many sheep but stole the “**one little lamb**” belonging to a poor man just to feed a guest. When David heard this, he was furious, demanding that the man pay back four times what he took. Nathan then looked at David and said, “*You are the man!*” because David had secretly taken something that did not belong to him.



This illustration depicts the biblical story of the prophet Nathan rebuking King David using a parable about a rich man stealing a poor man's beloved lamb.

The “Little Lamb” of Mandaue

In this news story, the ₱3.34 million is like the poor man's “**little lamb**.” While a city government might seem rich and powerful, its resources come from the hard work of everyday people. When someone in government takes that money, they aren't just breaking a bureaucratic rule—they are taking a “**lamb**” away from citizens who rely on those funds for health, infrastructure, and safety.

The Bible story shows us that people in power often think they can keep secrets. King David thought his actions were hidden, and the clerk in Mandaue likely believed her fake reports would never be discovered. However, both stories teach us that the truth eventually comes out. The city's decision to sue the clerk reflects the Bible's lesson: it is not enough to just stop doing wrong; you must also try to “*fix the damage you caused*.”

A Call for Courage and Transparency

This event shows us a “**sign of the times**”—people today are tired of corruption and demand transparency. As a Christian communicator, the task is to remind others that corruption has real victims. It is a call to be like Nathan: to have the courage to speak up for what is right and to protect the resources that belong to the community.

Conclusion: Protecting the Neighbor’s Lamb

By being honest in small things, we protect the “**lambs**” of our neighbors. Justice in Mandaue is not just about a court case; it is a spiritual reminder that we are stewards of what belongs to others. When we hold leaders and workers accountable, we ensure that the “one little lamb” of the poor is never sacrificed for the greed of the few.

The Cry for Justice on the Road

Am I My Brother's Keeper?: Civic Duty and the Sin of Cain in Cebu City

"The Lord said, 'What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.' ... Then Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is more than I can bear.'"

— Genesis 4:10, 13

A Tragedy on the Streets of Cebu

This reflection looks at a tragic news story from Cebu and connects it to a foundational story from the Bible. By looking at a car accident through the lens of faith, we can understand why we must always look out for one another. On February 12, 2026, *GMA News Online* reported a terrible accident in Cebu City. A 23-year-old man named Kingston Ralph Cheng was killed while walking on the road. The driver of the SUV, Sean Andrew Pajarillo, allegedly hit a parked car, sped away, and then hit Cheng. Witnesses stated the driver seemed intoxicated, yet a delayed alcohol test came back negative. The Land Transportation Office (LTO) is now pushing for a lifetime license ban and investigating parental accountability, reminding us that our choices never happen in a vacuum.



Kingston Ralph Cheng (LI), Contributed photo via MB

The Scriptural Lens: The First Denial of Responsibility

The Bible reading for this week (**Genesis 4:1-15**) introduces us to the first two brothers, Cain and Abel. After Cain struck down his brother, God asked him, “*Where is your brother Abel?*” Cain attempted to dodge his guilt by acting as if Abel’s life was not his concern. He famously replied: “**I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?**” (Genesis 4:9). God made it clear that no one can hide from the truth, as the victim’s blood “**cries out**” from the ground for justice.



Image of Cain lured his brother Abel into the fields and killed him with a rock.

The Mistake of Running Away

In this news story, we see a modern example of Cain's mistake. When a driver hits someone and flees the scene, they are essentially repeating Cain's words: "**I am not my brother's keeper.**" This action shows a preference for personal preservation over the life and dignity of the person harmed. The Bible teaches us that we are all deeply connected; whether we are behind the wheel of a car or walking on the pavement, we have a sacred duty to protect the people around us.

No Sin Stays Hidden Forever

The story of Cain shows us that even if we try to hide our mistakes behind speed or silence, the truth eventually surfaces. In the Cebu news, the driver allegedly tried to avoid trouble by leaving the scene, and the alcohol test was delayed. But just like in the Bible, the "**blood cries out.**" The grief of the Cheng family and the outcry of the Cebuano community show that the

collective conscience knows when a life has been treated as disposable. We cannot use legal technicalities to silence the “cry” of a life lost.

The Christian Response: Embracing the Role of ‘Keeper’

As a student, this story is a call to stand up for the truth. We must remind our friends and family that our actions have lasting consequences. Being a “**keeper**” means having the moral courage to stay behind and help when something goes wrong, rather than running away to save ourselves.

“To love our neighbor means taking responsibility for their safety as if it were our own.”

Conclusion: A City of Brothers and Sisters

By choosing to be honest and careful, we show respect for the life that God gave to everyone. We are called to make our roads and our city a place where every stranger is treated like a brother or a sister. Justice for Kingston Ralph Cheng is not just about a court ruling; it is about a community deciding that we will, indeed, be our brother’s keeper.

Conclusion

As we reach the end of these reflections, one truth stands clear: the streets of Mandaue, Cebu, and Lapu-Lapu are not merely locations on a map; they are the terrain of our salvation. Through the lenses of **Ex Abundantia Editiones**, we have seen that the mundane and the miraculous are deeply intertwined.

The stories we have explored—the rain barrels of Mandaue, the seedlings of graduates, the stretchers of security personnel, the “stolen lambs” of public funds, and the “crying blood” of the road—all lead back to a single, inescapable reality. We cannot claim to love God, whom we cannot see, if we fail to care for the neighbor, the street, and the environment that we *can* see.

Our journey through these “Signs of the Times” reveals that being a “Christian” and being a “Citizen” are not two different roles. They are two sides of the same coin. When we follow a city ordinance, we are practicing the discipline of the Kingdom. When we demand transparency and justice, we are echoing the voices of the Prophets. When we ensure the safety of our brothers and sisters, we are manifesting the compassion of Christ.

The “abundance” from which we speak and act must be an abundance of responsibility, love, and order. Let this compilation not be the end of your reflection, but the beginning of your action. May you walk through our city with eyes wide open to the Gospel hidden in the headlines. May you find the courage to be a “keeper” of your neighbors and a steward of the earth.

As the sun sets over the Mactan Channel and the lights of our tri-cities flicker on, let us remember that we are called to be the light of this world—not just in the pews, but in the heart of the city.

Ex Abundantia Editiones

Silang, Cavite, Philippines

Epilogue

The ink of the headlines eventually fades, and the noise of the city streets often settles into the quiet of the night. But the Word of God remains.

As you close this volume, I hope you carry with you more than just a memory of news stories from 2026. I hope you carry a new way of seeing. The “abundance” we have spoken of throughout these pages—**Ex Abundantia**—is not an abundance of material wealth, but an abundance of *presence*. It is the realization that Christ is walking the pavement of Cebu right alongside us.

He is there in the person of the city worker unclogging a drain. He is there in the student nurturing a sapling. He is there in the honest civil servant and the vigilant police officer. He is even there in the tragedy, calling us to be the hands that heal and the voices that speak for justice.

The city of the future is not built solely by engineers and architects; it is built by people who decide that their faith is relevant to the “Storm Ordinance,” the “Traffic Code,” and the “Public Fund.” It is built by those who understand that every act of civic obedience is a stone laid in the foundation of the New Jerusalem.

Go out now into the streets of Mandaue, Cebu, and beyond. Look at the crowds not as an obstacle, but as a family. Look at the environment not as a resource to be used, but as a garden to be kept. And when the world asks you, “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*”, let your life be the answer.

May your heart be so full of this truth that your actions cannot help but overflow.

Ex Abundantia Editiones

“GLORIA DEO – PAX HOMINIBUS”

Afterword

Writing these reflections has been a journey of discovery. Like many of you, I have often walked the streets of Mandaue and Cebu feeling overwhelmed by the weight of our collective challenges. It is easy to look at a flood or a case of corruption and feel that our individual efforts—much like two small trees or a single rain barrel—are insignificant against the tide.

However, the process of looking at our local news through the lens of the Word has changed my perspective. I have realized that “small acts” are only small when they are done in isolation. When they are offered in faith and shared through the power of digital media, they become part of a much larger, divine multiplication.

The Final Project

This compilation represents the culmination of my journey in the Digital and Social Media Publishing subject. It serves as my Final Project: Personal Digital Publication. The goal was not simply to create content, but to explore how digital platforms can be used to bridge the gap between ancient truths and modern realities. Through this medium, I have sought to prove that social and digital publishing can be a tool for communal healing and spiritual awakening.

A Final Thought

As this edition of **Ex Abundantia Editiones** concludes, my hope is simple: that the next time you encounter a news report about your neighborhood, you don’t just see a problem. I hope you see an opportunity to be a “keeper.” I hope you find that, out of the abundance of your own heart and the reach of your digital voice, you have exactly what the city needs to heal.

Until we meet again in the next edition, may you walk in peace, work with joy, and publish with purpose.



About the Author

Ex Abundantia Editiones is the digital imprint and pen name of **John Bert Torres**, a first-year student at the **Saint Paul Seminary Foundation** in Silang, Cavite.

Originally from **Cebu**, John Bert brings a unique perspective to his writing, blending his deep roots in the Visayan community with a developing theological lens. His work is driven by the conviction that the “Signs of the Times”—the local news, social challenges, and civic developments of our day—are fertile ground for the Gospel to take root.

As a student of **Digital and Social Media Publishing**, he explores the intersection of ancient wisdom and modern communication. He believes that the digital world is the new “Areopagus,” a public square where the Word of God must be translated into the language of the people: the language of civic responsibility, environmental stewardship, and communal love.

Through this compilation, John Bert seeks to fulfill the Pauline mission of “communicating Christ” to the modern world, proving that even a simple news headline can become a bridge to a profound spiritual truth.

When he is not writing or studying, he is actively involved in community projects, digital content creation, and exploring how technology can be used to foster a more just and compassionate society.

You can connect with me on:

 <https://www.facebook.com/john.bert.torres.2024>

Also by Ex Abundantia Editiones

Ex Abundantia Editiones is a digital publication series dedicated to the art of **Theological and Civic Integration**. Our work serves as a bridge between the “Pavement” and the “Pew,” seeking to find the eternal echoes of the Gospel within the fast-paced headlines of the modern world.

Through a blend of journalistic observation and scriptural reflection, we explore:

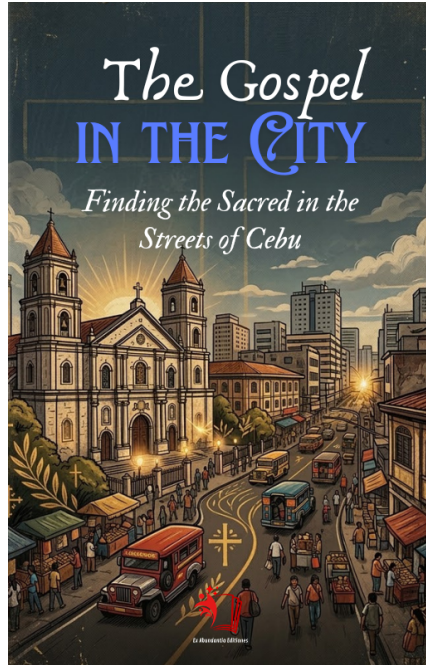
The Urban Gospel: Finding spiritual depth in the laws, ordinances, and social movements of our local cities.

Civic Stewardship: Redefining the role of the Christian not just as a believer, but as a responsible “keeper” of the community and the environment.

The Digital Areopagus: Using modern publishing tools to translate ancient wisdom for a digital generation.

At the heart of every edition is the conviction that our spiritual life is not lived in isolation from our civic duties. From the management of floodwaters to the protection of public funds, we believe that every act of citizenship is a holy opportunity to manifest the Kingdom of God on earth.

“Out of the abundance of the heart, the city is transformed.”



The Gospel in the City

Can the Gospel be found in the traffic of Mandaue or the headlines of a digital feed?

In *The Gospel in the City*, John Bert Torres invites us to look past the concrete and the screens to find the sacred pulse of the community. Moving beyond the quiet walls of the seminary, this collection of reflections treats the city of Cebu not just as a location, but as a living scripture waiting to be read.

Through the lens of a student of digital publishing and a heart formed in the Pauline tradition, Torres bridges the gap between ancient truth and modern reality. From rainwater harvesting and environmental stewardship to the tragedies and triumphs on our city streets, every headline becomes a theological invitation.

The Gospel in the City is more than a book; it is a call to “Digital Citizenship” and a reminder that when we speak from the abundance of a heart for the community, the pavement itself becomes a pulpit.

Discover how the Divine Master walks the streets of the modern world.